

An environmental management system, such as ISO 14001, is a powerful tool that can be utilized by an organization. The obvious beneficiaries are those organizations that have the potential to directly interact with the environment. However, other groups have the potential to benefit from the successful installation of an environmental management system. These other groups include adjacent property owners and environmental organizations. Their potential principal mode of interaction will be in the development of the list of significant environmental aspects. Therefore the material contained in this website has utility for all parties concerned about the environment.

```

graph TD
    MV[MISSION AND VALUES] --> SLO[SET LONG TERM OBJECTIVES]
    C[CAPABILITIES] --> SW[STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES]
    SW --> SLO
    FTM[FORECAST THE MARKET] --> RO[REVIEW OPPORTUNITIES]
    RO --> SLO
    SLO --> CS[CRAFT THE STRATEGY]
    CS --> IS[IMPLEMENT THE STRATEGY]
    IS --> ES[EVALUATE STRATEGY]
    ES --> COS[CONTROL STRATEGY]
    COS --> CS
    COS --> MV
    
    subgraph STEPS_BOX [ ]
        direction TB
        ST[STEPS]
        PLAN[PLAN]
        IM[IMPLEMENT]
        CHECK[CHECK]
        ACT[ACT]
    end

```

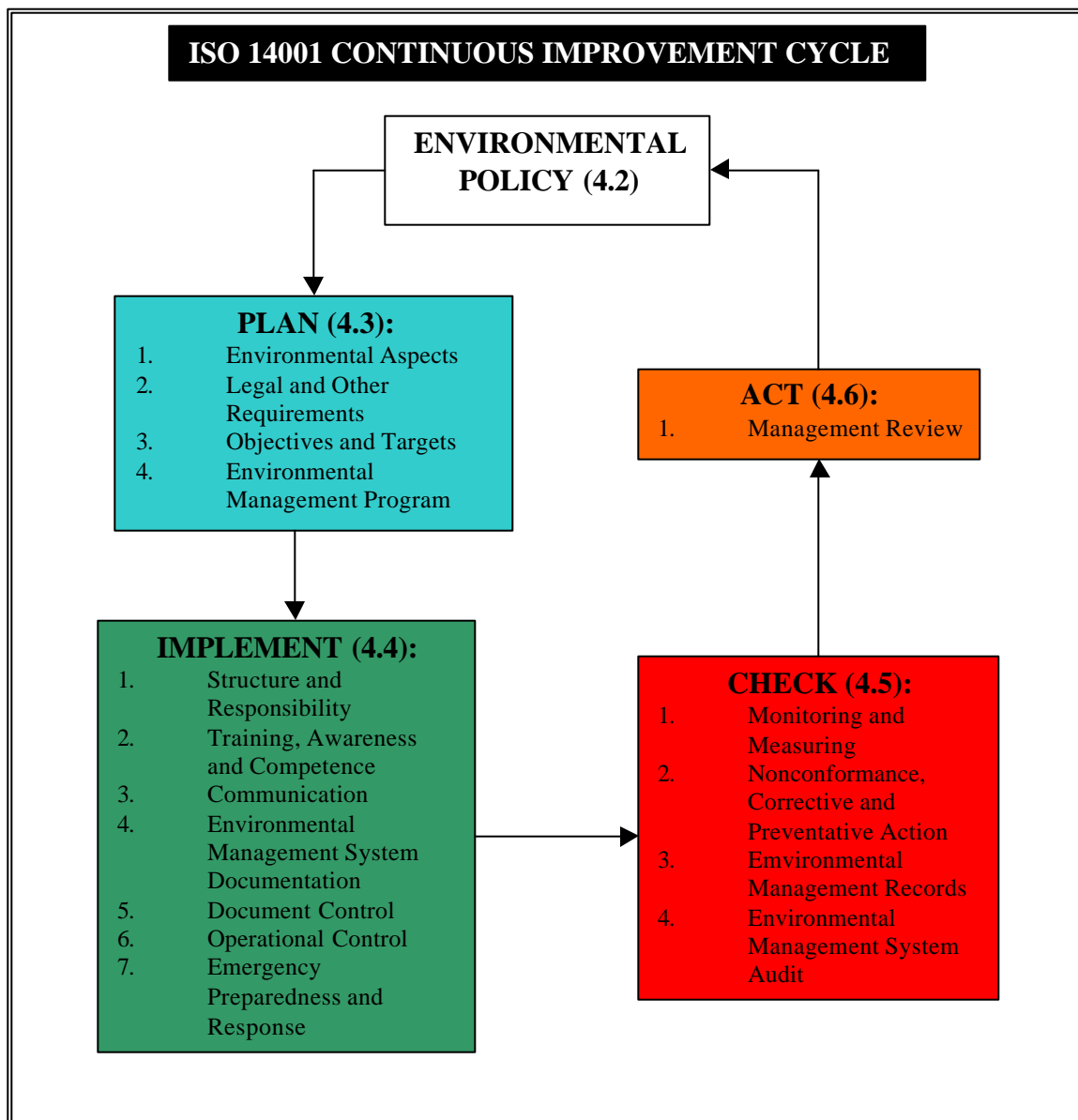
The diagram illustrates the Generalized Strategic Planning process as follows:

- MISSION AND VALUES** leads directly to **SET LONG TERM OBJECTIVES**.
- CAPABILITIES** lead to **STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES**, which then feed into **SET LONG TERM OBJECTIVES**.
- FORECAST THE MARKET** leads to **REVIEW OPPORTUNITIES**, which also feeds into **SET LONG TERM OBJECTIVES**.
- SET LONG TERM OBJECTIVES** leads to **CRAFT THE STRATEGY**.
- CRAFT THE STRATEGY** leads to **IMPLEMENT THE STRATEGY**.
- IMPLEMENT THE STRATEGY** leads to **EVALUATE STRATEGY**.
- EVALUATE STRATEGY** leads to **CONTROL STRATEGY**.
- CONTROL STRATEGY** has two feedback paths: one looping back to **CRAFT THE STRATEGY** and another looping back to **MISSION AND VALUES**.

A side box labeled **STEPS** contains four colored boxes representing the stages of strategic planning: **PLAN** (light blue), **IMPLEMENT** (green), **CHECK** (red), and **ACT** (orange).

The Generalized Strategic Planning process in the preceding figure follows the "plan-implement-check-act" cycle. ISO 14001 is based upon the same concept. One additional concept is highlighted within ISO 14001. The additional concept is "continual improvement". The "continual improvement" concept is aimed at improving on a regular basis the overall environmental management system. How do you improve the environmental management system? ISO 14001 requires that you evaluate the organization's interactions/impacts with the environment. Following this evaluation each impact is ranked based upon its significance. The most significant interactions/aspects are then addressed within the frame of the environmental management system for that cycle. Under the "continual improvement" concept the organization is attempting to continually reduce its interaction/impact upon the environment.

What does a "plan-implement-check-act" cycle look like under ISO 14001?



The conceptual consistency between a generalized strategic plan that an organization employs and ISO 14001 elements is demonstrated in the following table.

<b>ELEMENT</b>	<b>GENERALIZED STRATEGIC PLAN</b>	<b>ISO 14001</b>
<b>Vision/Mission</b>	Mission and Values	Environmental Policy
<b>Plan</b>	Elements: 1. Forecast the Market 2. Review Opportunities 3. Capabilities 4. Strengths and Weaknesses 5. Set Long Term Objectives 6. Craft the Strategy	Planning Elements: 1. Environmental Aspects 2. Legal and Other Requirements 3. Objectives and Targets 4. Environmental Management Program
<b>Implementation</b>	Implement the Strategy	Implementation Elements: 1. Structure and Responsibility 2. Training, Awareness and Competence 3. Communication 4. Environmental Management System Documentation 5. Document Control 6. Operational Control 7. Emergency Preparedness and Response
<b>Check</b>	Evaluate Strategy	Checking Elements: 1. Monitoring and Measuring 2. Nonconformance, Corrective and Preventative Action 3. Environmental Management Records 4. Environmental management System Audit
<b>Act</b>	Control Strategy	Act Elements: 1. Management Review

The preceding discussion underscores the fact that ISO 14001 is compatible with any organization's strategic planning. The planning element requires that the organization forecast the market and set long term objectives. With respect to ISO 14001 that translates to determining the environmental aspects of the operation and setting objectives and targets to minimize and/or eliminate the impact of those environmental aspects. The implementation element of both the strategic planning and ISO 14001 requires that the organization assemble all the necessary functions to carry out the strategy. The check element of both requires that an ongoing audit process be established to review the progress. Finally, the act element requires the organization to review what has been accomplished and decide what needs to be accomplished next.

The most important underlying theme that supports both generalized strategic planning and ISO 14001 is continual improvement. An organization must adapt and change with respect to its products, services or activities to remain viable. ISO 14001 stresses the importance of continual improvement. The amount of information that is becoming available with respect to environmental issues and problems is increasing at a dramatic rate. The review and assimilation of that material will be a challenging task for any organization. That task will need to be addressed to satisfactorily address continual improvement under ISO 14001. If an organization decides that it needs to be proactive with respect to the environment ISO 14001 is a management tool that should be examined carefully.

## REMEMBER

